Isiah Leggett
County Executive

August 25, 2009

Mr. Michael A. Blake
Deputy Associate Director
Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Blake:

I very much appreciate the conversations that my staff and I had with you, the Vice President, and other Administration officials, including the conference call with Timothy L. Firestine, our Chief Administrative Officer, on July 6, 2009. These conversations concerning how best practices Montgomery County uses at the local level can be helpful to you as you craft your approach to making government more effective and efficient in making the changes that America needs.

It is no secret that in the past, local and state governments have often served as laboratories for progressive policies and practices which frequently laid the groundwork for change in other localities and states and, ultimately, on the federal level. I am pleased to share with you the enclosed documents which I hope you will find valuable.

1. The first document is a 25-page compendium of our County's best practices.   We stand ready to provide you with more detail on any and all of these practices which are divided into the eight priority areas I am focusing on as County Executive.

2. The second document is a seven-page list of suggestions and ideas in the areas of policy matters, regulatory matters, federal funding, and federal awareness, all of which are based on our frontline experience with the important role that the federal government plays in advancing local initiatives.

As Justice Brandeis explained more than 70 years ago, "[i]t is one of the happy incidents of the federal system that a single courageous state may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country."

I invite you to Montgomery County where you can visit our operations first hand by touring our community, visiting our projects and learning more about our best practices and suggested ideas to improve government effectiveness and efficiency. I can be reached at 240-777-2550 and my Chief Administrative Officer, Timothy Firestine, can be reached at 240-777-2519.

Again, I appreciate your interest in our good work. Please do not hesitate to contact me as we continue our work together for change.

Sincerely,

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Enclosures

IL:fk

Best Practices from
Montgomery County, Maryland

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Best Practices from
Montgomery County, Maryland

The best practices are categorized into Montgomery County's eight priority areas:

1.   Responsible and Accountable Government:

- **Montgomery County Results (Priority Objectives):** Following his election, County Executive Isiah Leggett asked a group of 150 residents, representing diverse interests and cultures, to identify the qualities of life in Montgomery County that matter most. This large and diverse transition team of business and community leaders developed eight priority objectives that would address challenges facing the County:
  - A Responsive and Accountable County Government
  - Affordable Housing in an Inclusive Community
  - An Effective and Efficient Transportation Network
  - Children Prepared to Live and Learn
  - Healthy and Sustainable Communities
  - Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods
  - A Strong and Vibrant Economy
  - Vital Living for All of Our Residents

  These eight Montgomery County results are the foundation for establishing the County Results-based Accountability System. During the County Executive's administration, budget decisions have been focused on making progress in those eight areas. Departments, measured through their headline performance measures, have likewise aligned their activities and efforts to support each of these priority objectives.

- **The CountyStat Initiative** is a major component of the County's results-based accountability system. CountyStat requires decisions, actions, and policies that are driven by the extensive use of data, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and outcome-focused performance management. CountyStat relies on the strategic use of data and analytics to monitor and improve the performance, effectiveness, and efficiency of County services. This effort creates greater accountability; provides better transparency into County challenges and successes; and ultimately will help ensure the implementation of a culture of "managing for results" in Montgomery County. CountyStat's activities are focused around four major themes: Capacity Building, Policy Translation, Data Analytics and Integration, and Internal Consulting.

  CountyStat's work is highlighted on three websites.

  - http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/countystat highlights the work of CountyStat and presents the detailed analysis conducted for departments and on cross agency initiatives.

- http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/results provides an overview of the County's results-based accountability system and shows the results achieved.

- http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/recovery monitors and reports the use and impact of funding received by the County under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA).

- **"Yes Montgomery Can"** is a special collaboration of County government and community serving nonprofits, formed around the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service and the Inauguration of President Obama. The campaign encouraged thousands of residents to donate food, sign-up to volunteer, and contribute money to our neighbors in need. More than 500 volunteers went door-to-door in scores of neighborhoods on Saturday and Sunday prior to the King Day of Service passing out information about the new initiative and directing residents to the website, www.yesmontgomerycan.org. Hundreds of other County residents donated food and money. The food collected over the long weekend will serve more than 500 families for a month. Generous residents nearly matched the $100,000 contribution from an anonymous donor that sparked the creation of the Montgomery County Community Foundation's Neighbors in Need Montgomery Fund.

  Five thousand Montgomery County residents responded to President Barack Obama's call for a new spirit of service and sacrifice by turning out in record numbers to participate in events inspired by the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. Attendees assembled care packages for troops in Iraq, made Valentine's Day cards for the Orphans Foundation, decorated bookmarks and cards for children with cancer, and participated in dozens of other activities.

- **Central Vendor Registration System (CVRS)**: Montgomery County Department of General Services, in collaboration with Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools and the Housing Opportunities Commission, streamlined the process through which businesses interested in contracting with local governmental bodies in the county can register with those agencies. The Inter-Agency Central Vendor Registration System, introduced in early 2009, provides a one-stop registration system for companies interested in providing goods and services to one or more of four county agencies' procurement offices. It ensures that companies provide the information required by all agencies and allows businesses to maintain their own information at no cost, meaning that County agencies always have up-to-date vendor information. Enabling vendors to register through CVRS significantly reduces the need for staff involvement in vendor maintenance requests and ensure that vendor financial, tax, and payment information is the most current available. More information on CVRS is at https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/DGS/pro/CVRS.asp.

- **Online Contract Register:** Effective August 2009, every County contract, including all related documents suitable for public disclosure, will be available via a Google-type search engine. This tool will satisfy the interests of the business community, other municipalities, and the general public. It will save considerable staff resources currently spent responding to requests for information that range from single pages to whole

contract files, all of which will now be easily accessible. Further, this enhances government accountability and contributes to the County's commitment to reduce the use of paper.

- **Interdepartmental IJIS Development Model:** The Correction and Rehabilitation Information Management System (CRIMS) is a jail management system being developed for DOCR by an internationally known vendor. This is a member system of the larger Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS) umbrella which ties together the main criminal justice and public safety systems (mission specific) for the County. The model for developing IJIS (and member systems such as CRIMS, the State's Attorney's Case Management System, and others) was unique and critical to the success of developing and achieving funding for an integrated system involving several County departments and state agencies. A work group of practitioners from all member organizations within Montgomery County undertook the initial research and development of the concept, coordination, specifications development, macro-schedule, and budget submissions. They then collaborated on integrating the work of vendor selection, implementation coordination, and interface management, both locally and with the state. The result has been a well-received and coordinated macro-project, several elements of which are now operational, under development, or in planning**.**

- **Montgomery County Technology Best Practices:** Enterprise Approach to Technology Innovation, Modernization and Strategic Innovations is Montgomery County's direction across all departments and agencies to leverage the use and development of technology that maximizes the benefit of technology investments. With a hybrid approach to technology management and support, the County has been able to establish an Enterprise Technology Strategic Plan (ETSP) for current and future investments. As a result, the County has been recognized for excellence and leadership with the deployment of technologies serving residents and improving the efficiency of government. These include:

  - Desktop Support – The Desktop Computer Modernization (DCM) program established a successful partnership with a private company to enhance the quality of support to the County's users of personal computers and other mobile data devices. The outstanding results of the program are demonstrated through the innovative use of new technology coupled with business process improvements. The DCM solution has successfully resolved 96 percent of user problems through remote support, significantly reducing the need to dispatch a service technician to the caller's location. As a result, worker productivity has improved due to a significant decrease in downtime. The success of this program has been recognized from national organizations, including Public Technology Institute (PTI) and the National Association of Counties (NACo).

  - Telecommunications Methods and VoIP Convergence – At a time when local governments everywhere, but especially within the Washington, DC metro area, are focused on their ability to provide Continuity of Government when a disaster strikes, maximizing the survivability, availability and uniformity of

communications infrastructure is critical. Our telecommunication strategy provides the County with significant business continuity and survivability capabilities, which provide highly flexible, scalable, and standards-based building blocks that can be mixed and matched to create customized solutions. The solution implemented provides a robust application platform based on industry standard operating systems to support distributed IP networking and centralized call processing across multi-protocol networks, inclusive of Voice over IP (VoIP) solutions, both in trunking capabilities and desktop.

o <u>Fibernet</u> – This is one of Montgomery County's best broadband practices. It is a cost-effective municipally operated institutional fiber network that provides sustainable high-speed broadband connectivity to community anchor institutions, including schools, libraries, community and government centers, police and fire stations, parks, arts centers, job-training centers and public housing. If NTIA had drafted the BTOP rules consistent with the ARRA statute drafted by Congress, the network could have been used to provide sustainable 100 mbps service to elementary schools, Neighborhood Network public computer centers in public housing properties, new job training centers, medical research and health delivery centers, and other Community Anchor Institutions and Critical Community Centers. In serving a community of more than 950,000 residents, our County Government consumes voice/video/data services in extremely large quantities. The County determined that savings could be realized and a future-proof network could be created by building its own facilities-based fiber optic network. The IT organization undertook the mission of building an electro-optical network on the fiber plant effort. As a result, FiberNet now provides communications services for all County agencies.

o <u>Virtualization</u> – Montgomery County was an early adopter of virtualization and has been recognized by commercial vendors and government peers as a leader in application of server virtualization. Technology Services experimented with the technology initially to meet needs for testing and system evaluation. However, in a short period of time many opportunities were identified for which this technology could provide benefits and began pushing the envelope for these deployments. Almost immediately, the County reaped benefits in the areas of managing demand services through the ability to rapidly "clone" servers, reducing the time for service provisioning, gaining flexibility in the creation of server farms and simplifying operational activities in maintenance and physical configuration reductions through equipment consolidation. Virtualization was also a key enabler for the County's largest steps in green computing.

- **G2B Tax Lien Sale Process:** Our National Association of Counties (NACO) award-winning solution to collect delinquent real property taxes, has two primary components: the grouping of property liens for sale and the Tax Certificate Auction Website. In line with our primary objective to collect delinquent taxes by the end of a given levy year, the grouping of property liens provides an efficient approach to effect the sale administration during the advertising phase, sealed bid process, selection of winning bidders, and tax

certificate redemption. Additionally, the Tax Certificate Auction Website gives all interested group or individual bidders with comprehensive property and financial information necessary to easily and knowledgeably participate and complete the sale process. With the help of a transparent process administration and a relatively simple technology, we continue to meet our core mission in this area in a timely and seamless manner.

- **eTransfer Electronic Transfer and Recordation Tax Payment Application,** also a NACO award winning best practice, is an automated transfer and recordation tax and fee intake form processing and validation with full-featured administration and public-secured access to separate live processing and training area. Originally designed and developed in 2002 as a re-engineering of the deeds and deeds of trust single online transfer processing, the more recent version complies with the Property Records Industry Association (PRIA) standards. This enhancement allows title software companies to seamlessly pass data to the eTransfer application through the use of web service technology, eliminating the need for duplicating the data entry process. The application is paperless, expedites the transfer process and applicable tax and fee collections, and enables settlement companies to process deeds and deeds of trust online. With the application, the County has achieved a 24-hour turnaround for all electronic transfer transactions.

- **Mortgage Lender Tax Payment Website**, another NACO award-winning best practice, efficiently and accurately processes 60 per cent of the County real property tax collections and accounts. This G2B application is designed and developed as a re-engineering of the County mortgage lender billing and collection processing procedure. The County benefits through the elimination of payment data errors via its completely automated 24/7 data availability and streamlined data processing. The service site is a modern facility for data exchange between the County and the Tax Service Bureaus or Mortgage Lenders, replacing the antiquated medium of data exchange and tedious manual work processing. The site provides the capability to download all types of billing data records, such as real property, personal property, and tax sale liens redeemable. The application is an intelligent data retrieval management system that brings simplicity, speed, and cost savings to all parties involved in the tax collection process.

2.   <u>Affordable Housing in an Inclusive Community</u>

- **Inclusionary Zoning in Redeveloping Urban Areas** provides incentives for mixed-income requirements in the residential redevelopment of urban areas. Similar to the required provision of an affordable housing component in greenfield development, zoning ordinances require the inclusion of below-market-cost housing in all residential redevelopment, often in return for increased heights and densities. Such a program makes use of existing urban infrastructure, and the creation of mixed-income development fosters economically diverse communities and lessens the need for the concentrated social services that are often called for in low-income development.

- **Returning Vacant Foreclosed Homes to Occupancy** by assisting in their acquisition and renovation by non-profits and public housing agencies helps to prevent neighborhood blight caused by vacant homes. Montgomery County has used federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program and Stimulus Act funding to help Habitat for Humanity and the Housing Opportunities Commission acquire and fix up vacant foreclosed homes in high rate of foreclosure areas. Increasing energy efficiency in the homes is a priority. Habitat sells homes to its clients and the Commission rents its scattered site homes to low-income households.

- **Use of Government-Owned Land for Affordable Housing** can make unused or adaptable government-owned land available for development of affordable and workforce housing as a mixed-income development.

- **Customer Service Centers**: In 2008, the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) opened two Customer Service Centers to bring services closer to our clients, residents and customers. The centers are transit-accessible and much more conveniently located than the headquarters building. Technology enables HOC to deliver services in this decentralized manner which has the added benefit of reducing the traffic and general impact on the residential neighborhood in which HOC's headquarters building is located.

- **Mixed-Income Development**: HOC's commitment to mixed-income development has been successfully implemented in four Metro Station areas. The latest is MetroPointe which incorporates the Kiss and Ride facility and sits literally above the Metro station. Not only are one-third of the 173 units affordable, but six combine project-based vouchers with apartments equipped for severely physically disabled residents. The transit-oriented development required a sophisticated layering of financing, but it clearly met a need. It is nearly 100 percent leased and occupied.

- **HO&C (Housing Opportunities and Concepts):** Faced with a serious decline in the amount and reliability of federal funding in the early 2000s, HOC needed an independent source of funding for many of its programs. The commission launched HO&C, a consulting business whose purpose was to generate revenue for HOC. HO&C provides development consulting services to other public housing authorities, nonprofit organizations, and private developers. Through an act of the Maryland General Assembly, HOC's authorizing legislation was amended to create the business, which is accomplishing its mission.

- **Right of First Refusal (ROFR):** Montgomery County law confers a right of first refusal on the sale of multi-family housing properties on the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC). Working in collaboration with DHCA, HOC has used its ROFR to preserve the affordability of properties by several means. One is to purchase the property. Another is "preservation by persuasion." In exchange for not exercising their rights of first refusal, HOC and DHCA have been able to persuade purchasers to agree to maintain the affordability of a certain percentage of the properties.

3. An Effective and Efficient Transportation Network

- **Storm Operations Center:** Geographically situated in the mid-Atlantic region, Montgomery "County, Maryland experiences an average of 15 winter storm events annually, depositing 16 to 30 inches of snow and ice across a 550-square mile area. To meet the challenges of winter road operations, Montgomery County developed a Storm Operations Center; a high-tech communications facility designed to 'bundle' existing technologies and enhance and streamline local and regional communications, accurately forecast local weather and road conditions, and optimize winter road resources.

  The new Storm Operations Center allows DOT to improve its service to residents, enhance efficiencies and cost effectiveness of winter storm operations, and promote intergovernmental cooperation during winter storm events. Moreover, regional economic impacts of winter storms are mitigated and optimized as resources are allocated to the areas most impacted by storms. This optimization provides a systematical approach to road clearing operations thus restoring normal network-wide transportation operations.

- **Developed partnership for the purchase of Compressed Natural Gas fuel.** The Department of General Services' Division of Fleet Management Services partnered with the Office of Procurement in a cooperative purchase of natural gas through the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments. Fleet Management utilizes natural gas as fuel for 95 transit buses translating into approximately 1.8 million therms annually. Through the reverse auction process, DGS was able to save approximately five cents per therm which equates to a $270,000 savings over the three-year contract term.

- **Initiated Pilot Programs to Enhance Alternative Fuel Use and Improve Air Quality.** These programs include:
    - Replacing the aging and small compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling site with a new CNG site capable of supporting the County's small vehicle CNG needs as well allowing for use by the general public.
    - Replacing ultra-low sulfur diesel (ULSD) with biodiesel fuel for use by highway and heavy equipment use at all the depot fueling sites.
    - Establishing a Spill, Prevention, Control and Countermeasure Plan to support the County's activities at a leased facility for small transit bus operations and maintenance.
    - Piloting the retrofit of 10 dump trucks with diesel oxidation catalysts to reduce tailpipe emissions.

- **Implemented a Pilot Car Share Program.** The pilot was recently implemented to reduce the County-owned fleet of administrative vehicles and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. All vehicles are hybrid vehicles which save fuel consumption and reduce carbon emissions.

- **Reassignment of Underutilized Vehicles** to replace capital purchases of new vehicles/equipment. This measure further reduces capital expenditures during a period of constrained budgets (avoids an expenditure of over $500,000 for new vehicles), but also

more fully utilizes current resources through a better deployment of equipment and eliminating the use of vehicles not required or for which limited requirements can be satisfied through the Car Share program discussed above. Total estimated savings is $650,000.

4.   <u>Children Prepared to Live and Learn</u>

- **The Germantown Community-Based Collaboratory for Positive Youth Development (CBC)** is a local community-based partnership consisting of local youth, nonprofit organizations, faith congregations, schools, government agencies, and local businesses. It identifies local assets for youth, challenges faced by youth, and priorities to address. Through ongoing development of public/private partnerships, advocacy and planning, the CBC developed prevention-oriented goals with strategies under several initiatives designed to promote greater youth participation for positive development in sustainable.

  The five initiatives under this program are:
  - Academic Enrichment
  - Employment and Job Readiness/Preparation
  - Arts and Culture
  - Leadership/Personal Life Skills Development
  - Sports/Recreation Plus

- **Excel Beyond the Bell:** Montgomery County has established Excel Beyond the Bell (Excel), a countywide initiative in cooperation with the Collaboration Council. This is a public/private partnership with a number of County agencies, community-based organizations, and providers. Excel's mission is to inspire children and youth to realize their full potential by building a sustainable system offering safe, quality and accessible out-of-school time programs.

  Its four overarching goals are:

  - Establish that Montgomery County residents of all generations will understand and support the value of out-of-school programs in preparing children and youth for positive futures that help sustain the local quality of life.
  - Ensure that out-of-school programs will be safe, developmentally appropriate, and well run**;** all people who work with children and youth will be skilled in engaging them and supporting their intellectual, social-emotional, and physical development.
  - Create an intentional mix of public and private funding and resources that will create and sustain accessible, high-quality programs.
  - Collect data that describe need and demand for programs, their availability, and their impact on youth.

- **Broad Acres Elementary School Program Partnership:** The Department of Recreation partnered with Broad Acres Elementary School this year to pilot a morning

recreation program for students at the school. More than 88 percent of students at Broad Acres participate in the Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) program, the highest FARM percentage in our region. The school approached the department seeking help in providing a program for students who were dropped off at school as early as 90 minutes before the first class. This was largely due to parents' non-traditional work schedules and their inability to make other accommodations. The school did not have a way to accommodate these students.

Twice a week, the department provided a morning program attended by an average of 78 students. It also found a Foundation partner to continue the program into next year and expand it to four days per week. This program is directly related to the County Executive's goal of preparing children to live and learn.

In addition to providing parents with a safe place to drop off their students before work, the school has noticed a rise in attendance and improvement in social behavior among the students who participated. To keep costs down, career staff from the department, including the director, work on this program. Based on the success of this program, the department is seeking ways to extend it to other schools with similar challenges.

- **Employee Professional Growth System:** The Professional Growth Systems for principals, teachers, and support staff are the result of an innovative partnership between MCPS and the three employee unions to ensure that high-quality, culturally competent employees are hired and given opportunities for continuous growth.

  MCPS is one of the few systems in the nation to develop such clear professional growth systems for all of their employee groups. A staff development teacher in every school provides on-the-job training and through the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program; every new and underperforming teacher is assigned a consulting teacher for intensive assistance. A panel of teachers and principals governs the PAR program and makes recommendations on whether underperforming teachers are retained.

  In the past nine years, 5,174 novice and tenured teachers have received support. More than 4,700 successfully exited the PAR process by meeting standard. Just over 400 did not successfully exit this process and were either non-renewed, dismissed or chose to resign or retire. This figure includes 54 tenured teachers who were dismissed or who chose to resign/retire. In the ten years, prior to implementation of the Teacher Professional Growth System, only one tenured teacher was dismissed from MCPS for underperformance.

- **Professional Learning Communities Institute:** In order to improve student performance and close the achievement gap, the MCPS Professional Learning Communities Institute brings together school leadership teams in selected elementary and middle schools for intensive professional development and support. Using the case study method learned at the Harvard University Public Education Leadership Project, school teams analyze the beliefs, practices and processes of effective organizations, including those documented in case studies of three MCPS elementary schools, and learn effective strategies for using student

data, targeting interventions, engaging parents, and refining their own school improvement plans.

Students at schools that have participated in the institute have consistently demonstrated growth in overall achievement, while gaps in student performance have been reduced or eliminated. From 2006-2008, African American, Latino, special education, and ESOL students in schools that participated in the Institute showed significant gains in reading and mathematics.

- **National Board Certification and Development** Program: The MCPS National Board Certification and Development Program provides support and peer coaching to teacher candidates pursuing certification in the prestigious National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Through its program, MCPS concentrates on recruiting and supporting teachers of color as well as teachers in high-needs schools. Teachers who participate in this rigorous program enhance their own teaching skills and learn critical self-reflection and analysis skills to continuously improve and grow in their profession. MCPS leads the state with a total of 478 teachers having achieved certification while teaching in the school district.

- **Higher Education Partnerships Program:** The Higher Education Partnership Program is a collaboration between MCPS and local colleges and universities to develop staff capacity in critical need areas. There are more than 30 separate programs that provide opportunities for support staff, teachers, and administrators to pursue teaching degrees and/or teacher certification, advanced degrees in critical fields, and administration and supervision, or doctoral degrees in educational leadership and policy. Many of these programs provide financial incentives to attain teacher certification. Extensive MCPS field experiences, supplemental training, and increased supervisory support by universities and MCPS coaches are characteristic of all programs. In 2009, more than 280 employees completed a degree or certificate program through this program.

- **Differentiated Funding and Support for the Most Highly Impacted Schools** is a comprehensive model for funding, staffing, and programming was implemented in the most highly impacted elementary schools in the county. These schools include federally funded Title I schools and locally funded high-need schools.

  With the combination of federal Title I grant funds and local funding, MCPS invests an additional $1,800 per student per year in highly impacted schools than in other elementary schools (20 percent more per child than in non impacted schools). Since FY 2000, MCPS has implemented lower class size of 17:1 for all kindergarten through Grade 2 classes in highly impacted schools, pre-kindergarten programs to serve all low-income students, and full-day Head Start programs in all Title I schools.

  A continuous review of the model is in place to maximize the use of resources, as well as to develop and implement plans to meet the requirements for schools in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

- **Standards-Based Curriculum and Grading/Reporting:** The MCPS curriculum is aligned from pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 and is designed to ensure that all students—including ESOL and special education students—can access and succeed in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs, as well as the SAT and ACT college entrance exams.

  As a result, in 2008, 61.5 percent of MCPS graduates took at least one AP exam, compared with 25 percent nationally and 37.2 percent in Maryland. More than 46 percent of the Class of 2008 scored a 3 or higher on at least one AP exam while in high school—more than triple the national average of 15.2 percent and double the state average. And, the Class of 2008 scored a 1616 average combined SAT score, surpassing both national and state averages. The standards-based grading and reporting policies and procedures ensure consistency among schools and across levels.

- **Early Success Performance Plan:** The MCPS Early Success Performance Plan is an ambitious pre-K–Grade 2 reform effort to "raise the bar" for all students, particularly our most highly impacted children, and provide them with the skills and knowledge to succeed in reading, writing, and mathematics. The plan includes a challenging curriculum for reading, writing, and mathematics; ongoing assessments; full-day kindergarten; intensive professional development for teachers; and, meaningful family engagement and community collaboration.

  As a result, more than 90 percent of kindergartners have met or exceeded reading targets in each of the past three years, essentially closing the achievement gap by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status at this grade level. Seventy-two percent of Grade 2 students scored at or above the national average on the 2008 TerraNova assessment of math and language skills. Gains among African American and Hispanic students were nearly three times greater than for their White and Asian American peers.

- **The Seven Keys to College Readiness:** The Seven Keys to College Readiness is a public awareness campaign designed to create a college-going culture throughout the school district. The Seven Keys are research-based milestones along a pathway from kindergarten through Grade 12 that increase a student's chances of getting into college and earning a four-year degree. The multimedia campaign includes resources in print, video, and web in six languages, as well as parent workshops. It is a collaborative effort between MCPS, Montgomery College, the Universities at Shady Grove, and community and faith-based organizations.

- **College Institute Programs:** Through a variety of College Institute programs, high school students are able to earn college credits. In some cases, college professors teach courses on a high school campus during the school day to qualified juniors and seniors. Students also earn college credit via online college courses. In another component of the program, high school students take classes on certain college campuses to earn college credit.

- **Gateway to College:** In partnership with Montgomery College, Portland State University, and the Gates Foundation, Montgomery County Public Schools has

implemented a program that now operates nationwide to return high school dropouts to education. MCPS identifies students who have dropped out or are in danger of dropping out. These students complete requirements for their high school degree at Montgomery College and go on to get their two-year associate's degree. The program serves up to 265 students annually, and many of the students gone on to earn four-year college degrees.

- **Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement** is an innovative career-based instructional program designed in collaboration with Latino organizations to assist Spanish-speaking high school ESOL students (ages 18–21) with limited, interrupted, or no formal education who are unable to complete graduation requirements before they turn 21. An innovative curriculum allows students to prepare for the workforce by studying a specific career pathway program. It also provides career-based English language development instruction, literacy and mathematics instruction, as well as support for acculturation and family reunification. A family involvement component focuses on the unique issues facing these students and their families. Outreach efforts include collaboration and partnerships with community agencies and organizations to build a safety net around families with students enrolled in the SEPA program.

- **M-Stat:** The M-Stat process is the cornerstone of a comprehensive monitoring system and provides a framework for the intensive review of critical student performance data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, English proficiency, and economically disadvantaged status. Modeled after the New York City ComStat process, MCPS uses M-Stat to drill down to root causes, focus on areas of need, develop actions plans for improvement, and document best practices for recognition and dissemination throughout the system. The M-Stat process has led to the identification of exemplary teachers as well as successful school and classroom practices.

- **Montgomery County Community College - Science, Engineering and Mathematics (SEM):** A new cell biology lab was established with equipment donations from the National Institutes of Health and a grant from the industry. The NIH School Donation Program has enabled the Biology Department to obtain many pieces of used but usable laboratory equipment for Montgomery College. During the first year, we obtained equipment and instruments valued originally at approximately $500,000.

  The program was reorganized in the second half of 2007 and reopened in January 2008. During the first month, Montgomery College obtained used equipment originally valued at approximately $350,000. The Biology Department continued to obtain equipment from the NIH School Donation Program during the remainder of 2008. The original value of the equipment obtained from February to December 2008 was about $1,137,300.

  During this period, the Biology Department also obtained a $50,000 grant toward the purchase of a new DNA sequencer from LI-COR Biosciences.

  As a result, the Rockville Campus Biology Department is offering a cell biology course that is offered at only one other community college in Maryland and is comparable or even surpasses similar courses offered by many four-year institutions. This new lab will

also provide undergraduate research experiences for students in the NIH-funded Biomedical Scholars Program and will become a nucleus for SEM Rockville's planning for "Early Undergraduate Research Experiences" opportunities for all students and for the planning of "A Community of Researchers Program" at the Rockville Campus.

5. <u>Healthy and Sustainable Communities</u>

- **Water Quality Protection Charge**: The Water Quality Protection Charge (WQPC) is a fee based on impervious surface that is charged to County residences and some businesses. The charge is unique in that it pays for the maintenance and repair of most residential stormwater facilities in the County. By performing the maintenance, the County assures that stormwater facilities are operating properly and protecting water quality. The WQPC also is used for other water quality funding including water quality monitoring, street sweeping, and implementation of innovative stormwater practices such as Low Impact Development (LID) and Environmental Site Design (ESD).

- **Rainscapes Programs**: The Rainscapes Program provides incentives that offset the cost to households and businesses associated with adopting beneficial environmental practices. This program helps reduces stormwater runoff from private property through the use of rain barrels, rain gardens, green roofs, permeable pavers, trees, and native plants. Rebates on installation costs are offered – up to $1,200 for residences and $5,000 for businesses – based on signed agreements with property owners.

- **Clean Energy Rewards Program:** The Clean Energy Rewards Program provides an incentive to county residents and businesses choosing to purchase electricity from clean, renewable sources such as wind, solar, and sustainable biomass. Historically, the direct cost of clean energy is higher than electricity produced from fossil fuels. By offsetting a portion of this cost, the Clean Energy Rewards program removes one of the key barriers to widespread adoption of clean energy and helps accelerate market demand for clean energy.

- **Montgomery County Climate Protection Plan:** On Earth Day, 2008, Montgomery County adopted legislation designed to address a wide variety of issues related to climate change, including adopting aggressive goals for reducing community greenhouse gas emissions. To obtain broad community input on how to achieve these goals, the County created the Sustainability Working Group. It consists of 15 government and regional organization representatives and 11 public members with expertise in areas such as business, communications, land use/building, clean energy, water quality, and habitat protection. In addition, committees made up of more than a hundred additional stakeholders from the community collectively gave thousands of hours of time. The 2009 Montgomery County Climate Protection Plan contains 58 specific recommendations across a broad spectrum of activities from energy usage to agriculture to ensure that Montgomery County remains at the forefront of local governments addressing climate change.

- **Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program:** The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in collaboration with the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, is developing the Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program. This voluntary program is designed to help accelerate the County's transition to a more sustainable economy and to help businesses reduce their ecological footprint and benefit financially. It provides a checklist of over 200 facility/property-based and behavioral-based actions in six environmental categories: 1) Waste Reduction & Recycling, 2) Environmentally Responsible Purchasing, 3) Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, 4) Efficient Runoff Management and Water Use, 5) Pollution Prevention and 6) Transportation and Travel. Although certain checklist actions will be required within each environmental category, the certification process will be flexible, allowing businesses to select from a broad range of choices (including innovative actions not listed on the checklist). Certified businesses will receive recognition by the County, have use of the green business logo and be listed in the County's "green business directory."

- **Installation of Solar Panels on Public Buildings:** The Montgomery County Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station is planning to install solar panels on the roof of the Transfer Station by the end of calendar year 2009. The panels will generate enough power to provide about one-third of the energy required to operate the facility. This will result not only in cost savings of about $400,000 over 20 years but will reduce greenhouse gas and other pollutant emissions by substituting clean solar energy for energy from fossil fuels which serves most of the region. Future buildings need to be designed to integrate solar power options, such as electricity generation and passive solar heating, into the initial building and HVAC system design.

- **Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Collection Vehicles:** Montgomery County has begun transitioning its 100 contracted solid waste collection vehicles from diesel power to compressed natural gas. The first 20 of these trucks will begin service in April 2010. CNG has both environmental and financial benefits for the County. CNG vehicles powered by the Cummins-Westport ISL-G engine emit 85 percent less NOX, 90 percent less particulate matter and 23 percent less greenhouse gases than equivalent diesel powered vehicles and are 90 percent quieter than diesel trucks resulting in less noise pollution. CNG prices have been lower and more stable than diesel prices over the past two years, which will save the County money by eliminating fuel adjustment payments to contractors.

- **Low NOx Air Pollution Control Retrofit at County's Waste-to-Energy Facility:** Montgomery County has advanced the state-of-the-art in air pollution controls at existing waste-to-energy facilities by installing a new system for reducing NOx emissions. NOx, or oxides of nitrogen, contributes to smog and ozone in the lower atmosphere. This is the first installation on a publicly owned waste-to-energy facility of the patent pending "LN^{TM}" NOx reduction technology capable of cutting NOx emissions by 50 percent at existing facilities. The system has been operating successfully since March 2009 and is expected to newly define what can be achieved at such facilities nationwide. In the case

of Montgomery County, the NOx emission reduction achieved with this technology is the equivalent of removing 70,000 cars from the road.

- **Neighborhood Safety Net:** With the economic downturn, there has been a significant increase in need for Health and Human Services. We identified six zip code areas in which applications for economic aid and eviction prevention were the greatest. We then developed a public-private service delivery model that aims to employ and engage natural leaders in the community of need who are unemployed as community connectors to connect residents to needed services. The initiative is located in the neighborhood alongside a well-established community non-profit and builds a helping network that includes little and big non-profits and even the smaller ethnic culturally competent, credible and trusting non profits to bring in the minority communities into the helping network. The neighborhood site has a strong community organizing component that includes door knocking, building and strengthening the community and resident ability to respond to neighbors in need. In addition, philanthropy is very strategically directing and supporting charitable giving efforts towards the neighborhood safety net. The premise is to make it easier for residents in need to access all necessary services in their own community through a "no wrong door" approach, thereby preventing evictions, connecting the uninsured to healthcare and behavioral health care, help to pay for utilities, provide food stamps, child care subsidies and temporary cash assistance – and provide all of this in one community oriented welcoming location. Since the first site was launched in February 2009, we have provided services to more than 1,500 households.

- **Montgomery CARES:** The program served 24,000 uninsured patients by June of 2009 with a total of 56,000 encounters/visits. In addition we serve about 2500 uninsured pregnant women through the Maternity Partnership Program and over 3000 children through Care For Kids.

- **Integrated Case Management and Service Delivery:** The DHHS has been working on an integrated case practice model that supports a "no wrong door" approach which means that a client or customer could walk in through any door and receive all services offered by the Department concurrently. Towards this end we have redesigned our screening tool and developed a scheduling module to set up service appointments for all services centrally that is being tested. We have worked diligently to develop a practice model that supports an integrated practice framework for all staff and lays out expectations for our clients and we have developed a confidentiality policy that enables us to share information on clients only to support treatment outcomes across the multiple disciplines and programs that are servicing them. This document is legally sufficient and is compliant with HIPAA, 42 CFR and state confidentiality rules. We are currently engaged in a technology assessment to develop the requirements for an integrated IT solution that can meet the needs of an integrated health and human services workforce and our customers. We are working on a multi-county proposal at this time to support this outcome.

- **Public Inebriate Initiative Team:** The PIIT is a partnership with our local businesses to redirect inebriates who might be lounging in store fronts and in public places to overnight shelter and engagement for treatment. We have a mobile team that goes and outreaches both potential clients and businesses to respectfully and competently redirect inebriates into shelter and treatment.

- **Foreign Trained Nurses Program:** This program which started as an initiative of the Latino Health Initiative is now expanding to include other foreign- trained health professionals and is now being supported by the state and there is interest from foundations to also support this effort. Recently, a partnership was established with California's Welcome Back Center. The program recruits nursing professionals who are trained in a foreign country and are unable to be gainfully employed in their profession of training because they lack appropriate professional certifications and licensure. They then receive the necessary coursework and guidance to become certified and licensed so they can complete practicum or internship with local hospitals and then are gainfully employed. It is our hope to diversify this to other health professionals besides nursing in the near future.

- **Kennedy Cluster Project:** The intent of this partnership between County Government and the public school system is to address the social determinants that impact the education achievement gap for children and families of color. The project has produced several successes, including hosting resource fairs, bringing summer meals to impacted schools in the cluster, addressing confidentiality, and hosting multi-agency meeting to address family and child needs comprehensively and offering vision and hearing screens early in the school year to address early and effectively any potential learning handicaps resulting from visual or auditory limitations.

- **Linkages to Learning:** For more than 14 years, Montgomery County's Linkages to Learning program has served low-income students in the County's public elementary and middle schools. Its work has helped young people and their families obtain the health, mental health, educational support, and social services they need to become successful in school and within their communities. Linkages has been widely acknowledged by families, community members, and County leaders for the way it has linked public and private services, forged partnerships among agencies and organizations, and recruited a broad array of resources to enhance the skills of disadvantaged children and strengthen their families. This initiative began as a partnership between the County's Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, and a coalition of non-profit providers.

- **Green Routine Resource Conservation Program Overview:** Since the first energy crisis of the 1970s, Montgomery College has been a leader in sustainability, energy and resource conservation and cost containment. Integrated life cycle management practices have reduced the College's environmental footprint while avoiding capital and operating cost. The following list is a brief description of the activities.

○ **Heat Island Effect** – Use of high albiedo (reflective) roofs, green roofs and enhanced landscape to reduce the increase in urban temperatures due to absorption of solar radiation and heating in structures.

○ **Light Pollution and Dark Sky** – Best practices to optimize site lighting to provide appropriate lighting for occupants while reducing energy, reducing light pollution from spilling over into neighboring sites and limiting light pollution above the horizontal plane (Dark Sky).

○ **Sustainable Sites** – The goal is to limit consumption of undeveloped land by redeveloping urban sites or developing existing sites in order to minimize impact of campus expansion. Properties already served by transportation and storm water and utility infrastructure tend to minimize environmental impacts and preserve and improve existing urban settings.

○ **High Performance Buildings** – Since 1985, new and renovated buildings have been designed, constructed and maintained to minimize the impact on the environment. Energy efficiency, occupant comfort, indoor environmental quality, daylighting, high performance building automation systems, high performance lighting systems, high performance envelope systems, whole building total quality commissioning, environmentally friendly building materials and site infrastructure are routinely integrated into building designs. The two new science buildings, one under construction and one in design, are being submitted for U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) LEED Gold Certification which exceeds the County Council mandated LEED Silver Certification.

- **Innovations in Lighting – LED Fixtures and Bulbs:** In 2007, the staff at Brookside Gardens established a plan to replace the lights in the annual "Garden of Lights - Seasons of Light" festival displays with LED bulb technology over the next five years. The project will reduce maintenance costs and improve energy efficiency by 80 percent. Energy costs for the past two years for the display period have been reduced by 23percent. As additional displays are converted to LED technology, annual energy costs will continue to be reduced.

- **Solar Exterior Lighting Application:** Due to the remote locations in some of the park facilities it is difficult and cost-prohibitive to extend traditional wire-based utility services. One such case was the need to provide lighting at the Black Hill Regional Park Boat Ramp in the Northern Region. The solution was to install a solar powered exterior light to provide power to this remote location. The solar power application was significantly lower in cost than installing a conventional electricity service. Additionally, the light is now powered by a renewable energy source. The success of the project has proven that options are available that can reduce installation costs and save energy by using renewal energy.

- **Recycling and Solid Waste Management Program** has increased recycling rates from 32 percent in 2003 to 68 percent in 2009. The program established a Management Team

and Technical Advisory Group, conducted detailed disposal assessments, and developed an ongoing tracking system. The focus has been on conducting staff training and user involvement programs that included staff and community activities and projects. The program and projects implemented by the commission's Montgomery County staff have resulted in the following accomplishments:

- o Increased Paper and Commingled Recycling by 159,376 pounds
- o Increased Yard Waste and Compositing Reuse by 518,120 pounds
- o Increased Materials Recycling and Reuse by 52,942 pounds
- o Reduced Refuse Collection and Disposal Volumes by 1,412,800 pounds
- o Reduced Total Refuse and Recycling Volumes by 682,362 pounds
- o Implemented a program to expand the use of recycling containers in public park facilities.
- o Implemented a program to require planners for all public events to provide recycling containers. User groups, especially for organizations holding large public events, will be required to obtain recycling containers for their activities. Park staff will collect, haul, and dispose of the recycled materials during and after the event.
- o Develop a program in 2009 to capture data on new programs to recycle computers, phones, cell-phones, printer cartridges, batteries, furniture, carpet, and related consumable materials.

6.   Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods

- **NCR- Law Enforcement Information eXchange:** Montgomery County Department of Police has led an effort to develop regional law enforcement information sharing through two highly successful efforts. The first is the regional law enforcement data sharing system called NCR-LINX. Working with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, law enforcement agencies in the National Capitol Region and the Baltimore region are now sharing police reports, CAD data, and many other digitized data. This system is now an essential investigative tool and is used by thousands of police officers and investigators in the affected regions. There have been innumerable success stories and case closures directly due to the NCR-LINX system. The system is a national model for police and law enforcement data sharing.

- **Regional Pawn Data Sharing System:** Millions of dollars of stolen property is pawned in the pawn and second hand personal property shops in the National Capitol Region. In 2004, Montgomery County led a regional effort to build a pawned property data sharing system that has won three national awards. It is responsible for hundreds of arrests, recovery of millions of dollars of stolen property, and has aided investigators in uncovering extensive criminal enterprises devoted to profiting from theft of goods from large national chain stores.

- **Wheaton CSAFE Initiative:** The Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, *Collaborative Supervision & Focused Enforcement* (CSAFE) program identifies the exact boundaries of areas with a disproportionate amount of resident offenders. The program provides focused and coordinated law enforcement, offender supervision, and

crime prevention resources. The key component to the initiative is the Heightened Enforcement Accountability & Treatment Team (HEAT). The focus of the HEAT team in its role of reducing crime will prompt warrant service, offender tracking and monitoring, offender case staffing and strategies, and dissemination of information back to police units. Most specifically, the HEAT team is primarily concerned with process and enhancements in the way warrants are served, offenders are supervised, and key indicators are analyzed to make a difference in the community by reducing the occurrence of criminal activity. Although the program and partners must be created and implemented differently for each geographic location, the general model can be duplicated.

- **DNA Backlog Reduction:** In 2007, the Montgomery County Forensic Biology Unit had a backlog of well over 400 cases. In an effort to reduce that, several strategies were used and newly developed practices were put in place. To reduce prior submissions, we assigned an executive officer to review each case in the backlog. To minimize future concerns, we selected a Technical Leader of the unit, whose responsibilities included meeting with investigators and prosecutors on complex cases to determine which items of evidence were most probative. This individual had good investigative instincts and the ability to communicate effectively with the others in the meetings. Through these meetings, investigators and prosecutors got better insight into the strengths and weaknesses of DNA testing.

  The Technical Leader sought out grant money for outsourcing. She identified money and applied for a grant from NIJ. She then had to get a contract with a lab that could do the type of testing we needed. With grant funds and a contract with BODE labs, we were able to outsource 58 cases. This was a complicated process, which created a tremendous amount of work for the Technical Leader who had to prepare every case, then review every report as it came back into the lab.

  Finally, before a current case goes into the lab (after sitting in the backlog for some period of time), the case is reviewed by an executive officer to see if it is still open and a viable investigation. During the months in the backlog, arrests are often made or plea agreements are signed, precluding the need for analysis. Once that final check is complete, the case goes to an examiner for testing.

  Because of these efforts, our backlog was reduced from over 400, down to a state low of fewer than 50 cases.

- **Police Community Action Team (PCAT):** The PCAT is deployed geographically throughout the county based on crime trend data received from the police districts and the Crime Analysis Section. Problem areas are addressed with saturation patrol in marked police vehicles, foot and bicycle patrol, and surveillance from unmarked vehicles. Unit members attend community meetings in their designated areas to stay abreast of community concerns and react accordingly to address issues affecting the community. We currently have two teams that are comprised of a Sergeant, Corporal, and six officers

each. The teams work together, or in different areas, depending on the complexity of the problems to be handled.

- **Positive Youth Development Initiative (PYDI):** The PYDI is a collaborative effort between various county agencies, Montgomery County Public Schools and private agencies/nonprofits such as Identity Inc. to provide opportunities for youth so they can make positive choices and become productive citizens. This initiative focuses on preventing children from joining gangs, helping them get out of gangs, preventing crime and ensuring ample opportunities for all youth to participate in various programs that will help youth build confidence and keep them busy during critical times after school.

- **Maryland Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC):** ICAC is a multi-agency organization of Maryland law enforcement officers with a mission to safeguard children from sexual predators through a program of community education, aggressive investigation, effective prosecution. Participating agencies work in concert through a collaborative effort of shared resources to protect children from intern predators. The program is federally funded and monies are available to participating agencies for much needed training and equipment. In 2009 Montgomery County Police, the State's Attorney's Office and Montgomery County Public Schools initiated a shared initiative which is educating thousands of students about on-line computer safety.

- **Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP):** LAP is a program for first responder police officers arriving at a domestic violence situation. All law enforcement agencies in Montgomery County jointly participate in the LAP program, spearheaded by Montgomery County Police Department. LAP is a two-pronged intervention process that utilizes a research-based screening tool (questionnaire) and an accompanying protocol for referral to services for domestic violence victims. Nationally, just four percent of domestic violence murder victims ever availed themselves of program services dealing with domestic violence and in 50 percent of domestic violence related homicides, officers had previously responded to a call at the scene. The first quarter statistics for 2009 reflect that 99 percent of domestic violence victims participated in the screening and, of those, 77 percent spoke with a crisis counselor.

- **Assessment, Lethality and Emergency Response Team (ALERT):** ALERT is a team consisting of representatives from the Montgomery County Police Department, Sheriff's Office, State's Attorney's Office, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, and the State Department of Parole and Probation. The mission is to provide an integrated system of domestic violence services to improve victim's safety and to more effectively hold batterers legally accountable. Participants work to assess the risk of lethality, to maximize victim safety, and to provide information about the history and pattern of abuse at key system decision points.

- **Multi-Disciplinary Case Review For Physical and Sexual Abuse and Assault (MULTI-D)** is a multi-agency staffing of physical and sexual child abuse cases involving members from Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Police Department, State's Attorney's Office, County Attorney's Office, the Tree House, the Primary Care

Coalition (Montgomery County's Child Assessment Center), and others. The goal of MULTI-D is to minimize the trauma for the victim and their family. Participants are investigators, doctors, mental health therapists, prosecutors, social workers, etc. who work jointly to integrate medical, mental health, and victim advocacy components into the established process of investigating and prosecuting child abuse cases in the county. Efforts include strategizing particular cases, cross-agency training, periodic review of protocols, and suggestions for improved service delivery to victims and their families.

- **Fire and Life Safety Compliance Team:** Up until 2004, staff dedicated to insure fire and life safety code compliance in tens of thousands of business and multiple residencies never totaled more than 14 people in the Fire and Rescue department. About all that could be accomplished was inspection for new construction and business tenant build-out and those mandates such as schools, day-cares, and other institutional occupancies that required a license to operate. An increasing number of serious fires related to violations of county fire codes became a compelling reason to reinvent the inspection process. A full cost recovery system was created and implemented that funded just the right number of staff and operational materials. As a result, the vast majority of the buildings have been inspected and the life safety and fire suppression systems are now being inspected and more properly maintained and prescribed by the applicable codes. This has resulted in a higher performance rate of these systems and a reduction in fire and life loss. We now license all contractors who perform any work on sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, and in the near future, water- based extinguishing systems and mechanized smoke management in building. This greatly improves the quality of work being performed by the contractors in the field. The buildings are now much safer for public occupancy and for the firefighters fighting fires in the buildings when they occur.

- **Assembly Compliance Team.** This is a multi-agency work group formed to visit businesses that traditionally attract crowds of people – those that serve food and alcohol and that also are at risk for overcrowding and negative social behaviors. It involves the Department of Health and Human Service, Police, Liquor Control and Fire and Rescue Service. The intent is to insure that the businesses are approved to operate within county assembly business requirements and have all health and life safety requirements in place.

- **Child Car Seat Program:** Car Seat Program schedules appointments 20 hours per week in three different locations in the county to educate parents and caregivers about proper installation and use of child restraints. Once a month, the County also holds a large open seat check event at a car dealership, an excellent example of a public-private partnership that has proved very successful over the last 12 years. Annually, approximately 8,000 seats are inspected in the county. Educational materials are available in English and Spanish. Over 800 seats were distributed to low-income families at a reduced price in FY2009. The County also provides child restraints for some children with special health care needs and maintains a short term loaner program for car seats. Classes are offered frequently to train people to be certified child passenger safety technicians.

- **Preparation and Response to Dam Emergencies:** MCFRS manages several high hazard dams and emergency response Best Management Practices (BMP's) are outlined

in an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for all the dams. Components of the EAP include: Event Detection, Event Level Determination; Notification and Communication; Expected Actions; and Termination and Follow Up. The EAP is reviewed and updated annually. The Park Manager assigned to each respective dam area is recognized in the EAP as the Dam Operator who is responsible for managing all dam emergency responses. The Dam Operator functions as the on-site incident commander during all levels of operation. The Dam Operator is responsible for providing initial, timely, and accurate notifications to the appropriate personnel in the event of a dam emergency. Depending upon the level of the response, notifications include but are not limited to: The Park Police, Montgomery County Fire Rescue, the Montgomery County Emergency Management Group (EMG), Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Dam Safety Division, and technical representatives from the Department of Parks as well as contracted engineering resources. Data collection and analysis during each dam emergency is obtained from on-site monitoring wells, lake level sensors, and rain gauges. Visual inspections of the dams, the risers, and the downstream drains are conducted by park staff throughout the duration of the event. Semi-annual inspections are conducted by the Dam Operator and representative from the MDE Dam Safety Division. These inspections ensure safe operation of the dam, the risers, the sluice gates, and the downstream drain functions. The Parks Department, in conjunction with the EMG and MDE Dam Safety Division, will perform a periodic test of the EAP every five years. This periodic test will consist of a meeting, a table top exercise, and a review.

At one dam, visual monitoring is conducted by park staff, throughout the duration of the event, which must evaluate the reservoir elevation-area-volume and spillway capacity to assess the situation in determining the emergency level. At another location, visual inspections of the dam, the risers, and the downstream drains are conducted by park staff throughout the duration of the event.

7.   <u>A Strong and Vibrant Economy</u>

- **Parking Districts:** Parking Districts in Montgomery County represent a success story that has supported economic development and transportation management in specific central business districts for more than 50 years. Citizens, business groups, and local governments understand the need for a strong parking infrastructure and how it can serve as a catalyst for economic development. A Parking District can bring focus and resources to the parking experience in a defined location. Montgomery County operates four Parking Districts in the central business districts of Bethesda, Silver Spring, Wheaton, and Montgomery Hills. These Parking Districts offer centrally located and shared public parking facilities that are managed under parking strategies designed to maximize the usage of available parking supply in order to enhance the economic development of the central business district. Rates and parking supply are carefully balanced to promote and complement a comprehensive transportation system. The FY10 Operating Budget of $23.4 million for the four Parking Districts is estimated to generate $40.5 in revenues.

- **Smart Growth Initiative:** This initiative merges principles of smart growth with infrastructure investment and economic development. The initiative addresses immediate investment needs of the County while being an effective steward of the future by recognizing that actions today must be lasting and sustainable and not compromise future policy decisions for the health and welfare of the County. Through this program Montgomery County is relocating County industrial uses away from planned and existing mass transit locations to make way for mixed-use transit-oriented development with a significant orientation to a more balanced mix of housing for a variety of income levels. Montgomery County has only 4% of its land left for "greenfields" development. Through the Smart Growth Initiative we are making 150 acres of land available for future economic development and housing needs. Fifty two (52) acres are in the heart of our Life Sciences Center and will bolster future development in biotechnology to create the jobs – and the resulting tax revenue of tomorrow. This is a comprehensive approach to meeting our infrastructure needs in a cost effective manner and addressing important public policy objectives. The web link to the Initiative is at http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/Content/EXEC/cpus/index.asp.

- **Life Sciences Center:** Montgomery County is home to several federal facilities, including NIH, NIST, FDA, USHHS, NOAA, and others, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and a thriving Life Sciences Center initiated by the County more than 30 years ago. The County was at the forefront of research park creation when it gave the University of Maryland and the Johns Hopkins University land to create programs in the County, and reserved approximately 300 acres of its land for a research park that has attracted over 200 life sciences companies to the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center with more than 45,000 professionals. The County has business incubators to help start-up research companies and has created other incentives to attract research companies. Most recently, the County has established a Biosciences Task Force comprised of industry leaders to evaluate the state of the industry, identify barriers to commercialization of research and to review the County's strategic plan for developing and retaining biosciences industry within the County. The County is also revising its master plan for its Shady Grove Life Sciences Center, and the properties of the University of Maryland, the Johns Hopkins University and others to create a critical mass in which life sciences and related businesses can grow and which is focused on the creation of research and teaching jobs where researchers can live, work and play in a community oriented to mass transit with the planned Corridor Cities Transitway. This focus will help Montgomery County, the State of Maryland and the United States to be competitive in an area with increasing global competition. Through our task force and the collaborative work of our biosciences businesses and higher education institutions, we want to work collaboratively with NIH to help identify and reduce barriers to commercialization of research.

- **Agricultural Preservation**: Montgomery County has a nationally recognized, longstanding transferable development rights (TDR) program whereby approximately 1/3 of the County or 93,000 acres is preserved for agricultural use and businesses. This agricultural preserve is protected by way of low-density zoning, transferable development rights, conservation easements, and now through a recently adopted building lot termination program. Through zoning and master plans in other areas of the County,

developers can acquire bonus density through the purchase of TDRs and building lot terminations. The TDRs were created as a means of compensation for down zoning of agricultural land. Building lot terminations allow for severance of the right to build on agricultural land. Both preserve agricultural land and provide for cash infusions for agricultural land. For more information please refer to http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agstmpl.asp?url=/content/DED/AgServices/agpreservation.asp.

8.   <u>Vital Living for All of Our Residents</u>

- **Office of Community Partnerships:** County Executive Leggett created an Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) within the Offices of the County Executive to strengthen relationships between the County government and the residents it serves, with special focus on underserved communities and our neighbors in need. OCP's mission is to carry out the County Executive's commitment to build a larger policy table with participation by a more diverse range and greater number of residents. The goal of the office is to help make Montgomery County the nation's model multicultural community by promoting a culture of civic service and dramatically increasing the number of residents who volunteer their time and talents, and to build a stronger and more inclusive community. The OCP serves as staff to the County Executive's Multicultural Leadership Council, the County's Committee for Ethnic Affairs, the County Executive's six ethnic advisory groups, and the County Executive's faith community advisory group. The office works closely with the non-profit and faith communities. The County's Volunteer Center is part of the Office of Community Partnerships.

- **Language Access for Limited English Proficiency Populations:** Montgomery County government requires all its agencies, regardless of their nature or level of public interaction to, at least, have a language access plan and an evaluation mechanism. Based upon the federal guidelines, the County has also developed its own ten point compliance checklist to make it easier for each agency to comply with the federal mandate on language accessibility. CountyStat measures the progress on language accessibility to close the gap on accountability. Currently, we are developing a cultural competency framework beyond staff training so we are not using a 20th century, race- and gender-based diversity model to address our 21st century diversity issues.

- **The Customized Employment Public Intern Project** was created based on the County's knowledge that people with significant disabilities often have difficulty accessing County government positions. As an employer, Montgomery County recognizes that there are many job candidates with significant disabilities who have much to offer but have difficulty competing for traditional jobs within the government. To go above and beyond what other County and State agencies have done, Montgomery County has established an initiative to create flexible work opportunities for individuals to fulfill the work requirements of County departments. All County departments have the opportunity to work with a customized employment career specialist to identify and create part-time position descriptions based on the department's need. Individuals with significant disabilities are matched to work tasks based on their interests, skills and

competencies. The hope is that the public interns will gain job experience and training to be able to compete for merit positions within the County, as well as at other places of employment. To date, 35 individual interns have been placed.

- **Montgomery County Public Libraries partnerships:** Recognizing the importance of early childhood education and the role that libraries play in that stage of development, Public Libraries partners with community organizations such as the Judy Center, Linkages to Learning, and Head Start to provide early learning opportunities to at-risk children and families. We create new models of programming such as system-wide programming, utilize Teen Advisory Groups to share programming resources and maximize use of personnel; and create innovative programs such as the Parent Child Mother Goose program to provide early language and communication experiences for children and families. MCPL also partners with County agencies such as Montgomery Works to increase the accessibility of workforce development programs such as resume preparation and job hunting and such as the Montgomery County Literacy Council to provide programs that focus on adult literacy such as ESL classes for New Americans. In addition, MCPL and private-sector nonprofits such as the Family Services Agency and Street Outreach Network partner to provide innovative programs to at-risk youth and families.

- **Silver Sneakers Program:** In January 2009, the Recreation Department instituted a new program called "Silver Sneakers" that is designed for adults interested in a cardiovascular and resistance training regimen for health improvement. Anyone 55 years or older may use any Montgomery County Department of Recreation fitness and exercise rooms free of charge from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday–Friday. The program also directly relates to one of the County's top priorities -- ensuring vital living for all residents. The fitness and exercise rooms have some of the latest and best equipment to strengthen muscles and improve cardiovascular health. In addition, the Silver Sneakers Program offers free fitness clinics that include personal instruction in the basics of exercise and the proper use of the equipment. To date, 1,300 seniors are taking advantage of the program.

- **Department of Recreation Community Services Team:** As with all other County agencies, the Department of Recreation has seen a significant increase in demand for services, while also having to make necessary budget reductions to address the growing fiscal challenge in our region. It became apparent that the department could not continue to grow and meet the needs of its customer by doing "business as usual." The Department has aggressively looked to other organizations to identify and create partnerships that would further our mission of providing quality programs, services, and facilities to all. In a recent reorganization, the department formalized this effort by creating a newly formed Community Services Team. The charge of this team will be to find, enhance and execute partnerships with organizations and entities that have similar missions to the Department. In addition, this team will also be responsible for seeking grants and finding other creative solutions to support programs financially.

Suggestions & Ideas from
Montgomery County, Maryland

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Suggestions & Ideas from
Montgomery County, Maryland

The suggestions and ideas are divided into four broad categories: Policy Matters, Regulatory Matters, Federal Funding, and Federal Awareness.

Policy Matters

- **Unfunded mandate - Section 511 of TIPRA**: Repeal Section 511 of the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act (TIPRA), which requires governments with annual expenditures in excess of $100 million to withhold 3 percent on payments made for most goods and services, which creates an unfunded mandate on local governments. The proposed law would adversely affect contract competitiveness, raise prices, and impose expensive system modifications and ongoing operational costs, and is extremely detrimental to the small businesses that are the backbone of many local economies. It would cost Montgomery County millions of dollars. Congress should repeal the law and seek alternative, less costly ways to increase business tax compliance.

- **Federal guaranteed liquidity facility for short-term municipal debt:** For decades, municipalities have used short-term debt to temporarily fund capital asset requirements, to provide bridge financing for various projects, and in some cases, provide working capital. In recent years, short-term variable rate debt has become an integral component of the total debt portfolios of many municipalities, including Montgomery County. The variable rate nature of short-term debt acts as a natural hedge for interest rates, offsetting loses on investment portfolios.

  Contraction of the banking industry along with the recent poor performance of the financial markets has caused many domestic and foreign financial institutions to flee the Letter of Credit (LOC) market, which provides the security for short-term variable rate debt. The availability of fewer participants has resulted in much higher fees and a lack of availability for lower rated credits.

  Consideration should be given to the creation of a federal government-sponsored program that would fill the liquidity gap at a more reasonable cost to municipal issuers. A federal government-sponsored and guaranteed liquidity facility to back up the variable rate debt programs of municipal issuers would make LOCs available to more issuers, provide some competition for those few financial institutions still in the LOC market, assess reasonable fees based on credit-worthiness rather than supply and demand, and keep the short-term municipal debt market viable for issuers as well as investors in tax-exempt securities.

- **Unfunded mandate - Section 3 Housing Program:** The Section 3 program aims to hire federal housing program participants for contracts that the public housing authority awards. The importance of employment for low-income households is undeniable. However, the program comes with no funds to provide support for residents as they learn skills while working for contractors. It imposes burdens on contractors that become

disincentives for working with local governments, and it can lead to higher costs for the housing authority.

- **Unfunded mandate - community public housing service requirements:** Public housing residents are required to contribute a certain number of community service hours. Without discussing the fairness of the requirement, many aspects of it are labor intensive for staff. We receive no federal funding for the services we provide, both in guiding participants to qualified community service activities or in enforcement when they fail to comply.

- **Modernize copyright and fair-use laws, regulations:** Establish a national, multi-level, task force to review and modernize, as necessary, copyright and fair-use laws and regulations, especially with respect to digital content. As libraries move increasingly into providing information via online databases, this issue becomes increasingly important, as some types of information will soon cease to exist in printed formats. As developments in online music and movies in the private sector have shown, there is ample room for abuse, monopolistic or anti-competitive behavior, confusion, and inconsistency in establishing and executing regulations regarding digital content. This is a vital growth area for public libraries, and it is important that national policy be reviewed with respect to these new dynamics in providing information. For instance, a common disagreement is whether or not school systems and library systems (which often serve the same public, but are administratively separate organizations) can share a database license. While part of the issue lies in whether or not these local bodies can or will work together for local policy reasons, there is also substantial uncertainty in terms of what vendors will support. While it might never be wise for federal policy to mandate exactly how digital content should be priced for public entities in this regard, a review of ground rules and boundaries for both private and public players in this policy area would be useful.

- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC):** Allow the siting of FQHCs based not on underserved area and underserved population defined by census tract but rather by jurisdiction. For a county like Montgomery, where we have engaged in sound land use and housing policies and not concentrated housing projects, it becomes extremely difficult to site much needed FQHCs even as poverty in the County is growing.

- **Unfunded mandate (ARRA Compliance):** Recipients and sub-recipients of ARRA funding awards are subject to significant compliance requirements, such as expedited reporting, new reporting data involving job creation and retentions, and Buy American provisions. ARRA allows very limited funding for the costs of complying with its unique provisions and other administrative requirements. This limited funding is available for the prime recipient (e.g., State) who may not pass it through to the sub-recipient (e.g., municipality). Ensuring that a reasonable administrative cost recovery component is available, and requiring prime recipients to allocate a portion of administrative cost recovery/reimbursement to pass-through entities/governments, will help ease the burden associated with ARRA compliance for local governments.

- **Unfunded mandate (ARRA Requirements):** Local governments could more actively pursue and meet deadlines for ARRA grant dollars if there were better identified federal single points of contact related to stimulus dollar questions. Also, it would ensure more

comprehensive participation and compliance by local government if there were more standardized and readily developed requirements for Federal Stimulus dollars.

- **Local recycling requirements:** Develop policies and guidelines to require federal agencies/properties to comply with the recycling and waste reduction requirements of the jurisdiction where the agency/property is located.

- **Recycled materials in federal projects:** Specify certain recycled materials in federal projects such as mixed broken glass as drainage material; crumb rubber from tires or mixed broken glass in certain asphalt blends; recycled plastic lumber for maintenance of walkways, benches, decks at national parks, etc. This could also result in substantial savings through avoided disposal costs and create jobs in the recycled construction materials industry.

- **Guidelines for waste-to-ash beneficial use:** Have USEPA establish specific guidelines for waste-to-energy ash beneficial use, e.g., if the ash meets established criteria, it could be used for road base or some other construction purpose in designated locations. This would reduce disposal costs and create jobs in the recycled construction materials industry.

- **Establish parity between the transit benefits and parking benefits** which are able to be provided by an employer tax-free to an employee a permanent feature of federal law. E.g., extend the $230/month transit benefit currently due to expire at the end of calendar 2010, and require the transit benefit be maintained at the same level as the tax-free parking benefit as adjustments are made in the future.

- **Require federal agencies throughout the U.S. to provide the maximum tax-free transit benefit** to their employees, or a benefit at least equivalent to that provided for those who drive and park.

- **Combine the bike commuting benefit** (currently $20/month max) with transit benefits, to encourage commuters to use a bike to access transit.

- **Provide funding for a broad range of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) activities** (including staff support) directly to local governments. Specifically support creation of targeted efforts for TDM to reduce auto dependency within urban centers/nodes such as Montgomery County's Transportation Management Districts.

- **Create a transit program like the FHWA/DoD "defense access roads program"** or broaden that program and make it multimodal to include transit. Even more broadly, federal facilities need to consider and fund transit access (e.g., all DoD and facilities like NOAA, FDA, Energy, NIH, etc).

Regulatory Matters

- **Unreasonable administration of regulations:** An excellent example of this widespread issue is Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC), HUD's system for evaluating housing units funded by federal programs from both physical and fiscal perspectives. Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) certainly acknowledges HUD's legitimate interest in determining the condition of units funded with tax dollars.

At the same time, HOC finds HUD's administration of this program to be inflexible and inconsistent.

For example: The Metropolitan is a Class A high-rise building immediately adjacent to the Bethesda Metro Station. When the inspector toured the property, a retail space was vacant and under renovation for a new tenant. The fire alarm system was being tested by the Montgomery County Fire Marshal and was, therefore, not operating in normal mode. Plus, 11 sprinkler head escutcheons in the construction portion of the retail space were absent, consistent with the stage of the construction. The inspector assessed considerable point deductions or both of these conditions, despite his recognizing that the circumstances were abnormal and despite the fact that the regulations permitted recognition of the situation. Repeated appeals to HUD were denied with little consideration, ignoring evidence even from the Fire Marshal. Given that the penalties for bad REAC scores are considerable, it is incumbent on HUD to be less cavalier about the process.

- **Streamline the E-Rate Program:** Eliminate the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) filtering requirement, which is a major impediment to public library access to the E-Rate program. The majority of library systems in the country subscribe to the American Library Association's view that access to on-line information should be unfettered and private. Many library systems have concluded that modern filtering software is incapable of balancing unfettered and private access to information with preventing access to illegal pornography and/or "obscene" content (which is difficult to consistently define, nationwide). Fear of violating this requirement for strict filtering of public internet access prevents many systems from applying for funds. How internet content is managed at libraries should be a local decision, not a federal one. The E-Rate program as implemented contains very detailed -- yet conflicting, confusing and unnecessary -- requirements for procuring telecommunications. Like other federal grant programs, each local jurisdiction should document its adherence to local Procurement procedures. The E-Rate program does not do this and essentially creates a requirement for each entity to bid out requirements as part of the E-Rate application process. This requirement conflicts with the practical arrangements for basic telecommunications that some jurisdictions have in place.

- **Language access for limited English proficiency populations:** Local jurisdictions throughout the National Capital region are on a steep learning curve as how best to serve an increasing global population and develop linguistic and cultural competency of the local governments. Currently, each federal government agency requires its financial assistance recipients to comply with Title VI by providing language assistance to people with limited English proficiency (LEP). But, this is a largely unfunded mandate at local levels with little cohesive oversight from the federal government on how a local jurisdiction as a whole -- not agency by agency -- can measure its work and be accountable. Jurisdictions that want to do -- or must do -- the right things are left trying to figure out many things on their own.

Federal Funding

- **Issues with use of federal funds at local level:** The federal government's administrative procedures are overly onerous for local governments to the point that pursuit and use of

- funds is often not worth the effort. Additionally, the state often requires additional administrative activities associated with such funds. Local governments do not have adequate administrative staff to handle all the work. The suggestion is to remove the layers of administrative oversight for projects below a certain dollar amount.

- **Greater stormwater management funding:** Currently, EPA 319 grants are not allowed to be used to meet the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements. Given the scope of the latest NPDES permits, local jurisdictions need technical and financial assistance from state and federal agencies. Therefore the federal government should provide greater funding for stormwater management and allow EPA 319 grants be used to comply with mandates in the NPDES permit

- **Park Service funding suggestions:** Broaden funding for the National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Offices to fund Historic Structures and Technical Reports, which include scientific analyses; establish a tiered volunteer wage rate that allows volunteers who work for free in professional capacities to show in-kind rates that are more representative of value; and provide incentives to local governments that adopt federal or state best practices in the form of reduced rates for services.

- **Funding complexity**: Montgomery County operates on a July 1 fiscal year, the federal government operates on an October 1 fiscal year, and voucher and public housing funding operates on a January 1 fiscal year, which makes budgeting extremely difficult. When developing and adopting our budget, we can only <u>estimate</u> the federal funding that comprises 40 percent of our operating budget. Sometimes the federal funding decisions are not made until we are seven months into our fiscal year. Furthermore, notifications from HUD often take several months after the federal budget is adopted. Prudent management requires PHAs to limit the number of vouchers they issue because they don't know the exact amount of voucher funding they will receive. Consequently, HUD lowers Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) scores because PHAs often cannot fully utilize all the vouchers for which they are authorized.

- **New transportation funding bill**: Legislation should require that all transit systems of a certain size and with certain characteristics (for example, the top 75 transit systems in urbanized areas over 200,000 population) receive 5307 funding directly from the Federal Transit Administration (rather than through a state) based on their contributions to the formula. We are asking for this to be changed in the reauthorization bill.

- **Increase bus funding** for areas of non-attainment so that all future bus purchases may be hybrids or other fuel technology proven to address areas' pollution factors.

- **"Yes Montgomery Can" Campaign:** We raised $25,000 to make this collaboration possible. This relatively small amount of money allowed us to hire a project organizer to facilitate the collaboration of dozens of government, business, and community organizations <u>and </u>to pay for the basic materials to promote the initiative. Providing modest community seed grants of $10,000 to $25,000 will enable communities to tap the time, talent, and treasure of their residents.

- **Libraries in capital projects:** More consideration should be given to including public libraries in federal capital or economic development projects. When relocating, renovating, or establishing a federal campus, for instance, there should be active

consideration and consultation with the localities involved as to whether a public library might be a beneficial, viable addition to the project.

Federal Awareness

- **Clarify payment for local transit connection services:** There should be clarification of the fact that federal agencies may provide – and use their funds to pay for – shuttles and other and other transportation connection services to link federal facilities with transit stations and other major transit centers/nodes. (This was to have been clarified by the Sarbanes bill but some agencies say they still do not feel they are authorized to use federal funds in this way.)

- **Local procurement opportunities from federal facilities:** In jurisdictions that are home to federal installations, the installations should proactively acquaint local businesses with the procurement opportunities that are available through ARRA funding, given that the idea of a stimulus package is to "stimulate the local economy."

- **National Special Security Events (NSSE):** There can be a significant impact from NSSE events on Montgomery County even when the event is held in another area within the National Capital Region (NCR). The federal government should consider how NSSE events impact surrounding jurisdictions and consequently, provide resources to support both planning and operational requirements. For example, the presidential Inauguration required significant County resources from our public safety and transportation departments. However, the County has not been able to recoup costs in a similar manner as the District of Columbia and does not receive a Congressional appropriation to support our involvement with these types of activities.

- **Expanded focus:** Given the impact of social determinants on health outcomes, it would be helpful if Health Information Technology (HIT) had both a public health focus and a social determinants focus--not just Health IT--for hospitals, doctors' offices and community health clinics. The current HIT efforts are only focused on a health care setting, such as a hospital, a doctor's office or a federally qualified health center, and do not include public health as a venue for investment efforts. They also do not include social determinants. For example, to stabilize the health of a homeless diabetic, it is critical to address homelessness. But there is no guidance on how to link the homeless and health care data systems or to integrate data to improve care.

- **Federal privacy statutes in the health field:** It would be helpful if the federal government could examine federal confidentiality statutes and allow for sharing of information across disciplines for purposes of treatment without cumbersome release of information requirements from clients and patients.

- **Help for single mothers in poverty:** Single mothers with young children are the population subset of families most likely to be poor. The ramifications of extreme poverty for their children can be life-long, and the current economic difficulties mean that more and more families are falling into poverty. A good use of economic stimulus funds might be to develop programs targeting young single mothers with young children, offering intensive case management and social work services, including counseling with the specific goal of completing school, finding quality child care and transportation, stable housing and employment, family planning, nutrition and other health services.

Such a program could mean the difference between poverty and self sufficiency for these most vulnerable families.

- **A gap in services for New Americans:** More federal attention must be focused on integration and services for New Americans. Increased funding for organizations and programs serving immigrants in their native languages can assist local jurisdictions such as Montgomery County whose foreign-born population has doubled since 1990. Many services provided by mainstream organizations are not linguistically accessible or culturally appropriate for the immigrants who have not yet mastered English.